



Chapter 2

General Information

COURT HEARING PROCEDURE

Make sure to read **ALL** Answers to Frequently Asked Questions and Instruction Packets on the subject of your Hearing and any other related materials **BEFORE** the day of your Court Hearing.

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE THE COURT HEARING?

Prior to the Court Hearing, you will receive a notice which contains the date and time of the hearing. It is suggested that you arrive at the courthouse at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled hearing time. You should allow plenty of time for parking and to pass through security. Cellular phones or electronic devices are not permitted in some courthouses. It is recommended that you leave these devices in your car or in the lockers in the parking garage.

After passing through security, check in at the information or reception desk, where you will be directed to the waiting area outside of the courtroom.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A COURT HEARING?

You will be called into the courtroom by the judicial assistant and told where to sit. This time is a good opportunity to arrange your papers and documents prior to the start of the hearing. You will be told to “rise” (stand up) when the Judge or Commissioner (“Judicial Officer”) enters the courtroom. The Judicial Officer will tell you when you may sit down.

A certain procedure must be followed during a Court Hearing. It is important that you are familiar with this procedure so that you know what you are allowed to do, when you are allowed to talk, and how to tell your side of the story. A basic outline of the procedure is as follows: 1) Opening Statements; 2) the person who asked for the Hearing will tell his/her story; 3) the other person(s) will

tell his/her story; and 4) Closing Arguments. Each of these steps is described in this packet.

There are flowcharts in chapter 8 of this packet which outline the Court Hearing Procedure.

To make this packet easier to understand, it will refer to a case as having only 2 parties – you and the other side. (The term “party” refers to a litigant or person involved, named, in a court case.) However, if at any point, the Court Hearing Procedure differs when more than 2 parties are involved, this packet will explain how it differs.